

LOUS CASE OF BLIND
TOM
by
B. Abbott

HV 1792 B



M.C. MIGEL LIBRARY
AMERICAN PRINTING
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

A NEGRO WOMAN standing on the slave block and holding to her breast a pulpy black bundle of humanity, her twenty-first child! As she was being bid on by the slave owners, the auctioneer shouted, "We'll throw in the pick-aninny!"

It may seem almost incredible but in less than twenty years the "pick-aninny", grown into a man, had created a furore in all parts of the world by his playing the piano. Great musicians heard and were amazed and many gave him severe tests of ear and memory, for he was blind and entirely untaught musically. His genius and the exquisite beauty of his playing aroused the admiration of all kinds of people, from the uneducated to those of the highest culture, who were thrilled and amazed at what they heard.

Blind Tom was born May 25, 1849, near Columbus, Georgia. His parents were common field hands of pure Negro blood. Blind from birth, Tom learned nothing from sight, and in infancy he showed little intelligent interest in anything. However, almost as a baby he manifested a strange interest and fondness for sounds, as well as an amazing talent for imitating any sound he heard; and his memory seemed to register anything from long conversations to musical tones. He loved to be out of doors, and the night seemed especially to fascinate him. Thus, whenever his mother failed to lock her door, he would escape and get out, playing about as in the day. Could it have been that when "the harsh noises of our day" were silenced, he heard sounds that did not penetrate to our duller ears?

An Early Start

His marked musical talent was noticeable before he was two years of age; but it was not until he was about four that a piano was installed in the home of his owner, Gen. Bethune. When anyone played Tom would listen, and it is easy to understand that the melodies he heard, and perhaps some original musical ideas, were being stowed away in his mind to be used when opportunity should come to him. The opportunity came when he escaped from his mother's room in the night. He found the door and piano open and began his first playing. Thus, before daybreak, some one was awakened by the piano. He played on until the family came down at the usual hour. Although the performance (his first) was far from perfect, it seemed marvelous to them as they stood about watching him. He played with both hands, using white and black keys.

After this experience, he was given access to the piano. He is said to have played everything he heard, and then began creating his own compositions imitating the various phases of nature

—the wind, the trees, and the birds. It would seem that all nature must have been whispering to him of her beauties, giving him a vision of loveliness unseen and unheard by those who had the full development of human sight and intellect. Someone has said, "There is no art about him. God has given him a guide, but it is a



V. LVIII No 8

Blind Tom The Etude, Aug. 1940

The Miraculous Case of Blind Tom

HV 1792 B

The Enigma of the Famous Musical Genius
Who Astonished the World

By

Eugenie B. Abbott

silent one, that of nature herself."

When Tom was less than five years old he listened during a severe thunder storm; and as it ended he immediately went to the piano and played what seemed to represent quite clearly the rain, wind and thunder. This was given on his program as *The Rain Storm*.

Much has been said and written of his extreme bodily activity. As he could not well join other children in play, and lack of sight limited him to small spaces, instinct would have led him to develop exercises of his own, which naturally would consist of jumping, whirling, twisting of legs and arms. Whatever the cause of the intensity of action carried on throughout the years, it could easily be attributed to a very sensitive, nervous temperament, which must have suffered under the constant giving of concerts and exploitation of him, partially as a doer of tricks, for the crowds to laugh at.

Tom Takes a Lesson

Tom was nature's child, and lived in a mental world of his own, a world of music. We know the great Beethoven loved the out of doors, and received from nature messages of harmony and beauty which inspired his greatest compositions. To this blind, uneducated Negro also must have come many lovely messages of harmony and beauty; and, from what might seem to be mental darkness, there were haunting memories of beauty which he persistently reached out to receive. This may be illustrated by the following story.

When a girl not yet twenty-one, I went to the old town of Winchester, Virginia, to teach music in a private school. One day it was announced that Blind Tom would give a concert. Great interest was expressed over the approaching event. I was filled with curiosity to hear this Negro, but most of all, to be convinced of his power to imitate any composition; and was hopeful there would be played something quite difficult.

The moment arrived when the invitation was given from the stage for someone in the audience to play for Tom to imitate. The request came for me to play. The choice I made was the Heller transcription of Schubert's *Die Forelle (The Trout)*. As I took my seat at the piano the manager said, "not too long a piece." I told him I would stop when about half way through. As I played I sensed that Tom was reacting to the music in a way that affected the audience with a suppressed desire to relieve themselves in merriment.

The manager again came to me and said, "Go right on." After I finished he announced that, as Tom had heard this composition before, he would ask the young lady to play something else. I chose one of the simpler Chopin waltzes, which Tom imitated very well. (Continued on Page 564)

Record Releases of Dominating Interest

By
Peter Hugh Reed

PAGANINI WAS NOT a great composer and his output was limited. His greatest fame, of course, was as a violin virtuoso. But since his "Twenty-four Caprices" are actually lessons in various technical problems, which, taken as a whole, constitute a treatise on his technic, the issuance of these pieces in two album sets was the wisest observation any record company could have made in honor of the recent centenary of the composer's death. Victor makes this contribution with the nineteen year old violinist, Ossy Renardy, as the performer. Renardy, who specializes in the playing of Paganini's compositions, gives highly commendable performances of the first twelve Caprices (album M-672). There are recorded examples of more remarkable renditions of a couple of these, such as the *A minor No. 5* and *E major No. 9*, by the more mature artists, Primrose and Szigeti; but this fact need not detain the violin student interested in the series as a whole, for Renardy has given admirable performances. The album of the second twelve Caprices was not at hand when this review was written.

Paganini's "Grand Quartet in E major", issued by Royale, also as a centenary gesture (set 27), hardly represents the composer in a favorable light. Reminiscent of Rossini and Schubert, the music is lacking in distinction and originality and is far too redundant for its own good. As a novelty it may find some appeal. It is excellently performed by the York String Quartet, although not entirely satisfactorily recorded.

Honoring the centenary on last May 7th, of Tchaikowsky's birth, Columbia has issued a new recording of the master's "Fifth Symphony"; and both Columbia and Royale have issued recordings of his "Quartet in D major, Op. 11." Tchaikowsky's "Fifth Symphony" is perhaps his most popular. It is a work that, according to many writers, embodies a program in which the "tread of an inexorable fate" intrudes upon all four movements. The late Philip Hale contended that it awakens in the listener "the haunting, unanswerable questions of life and death that concern us directly and personally." Rodzinski, conducting the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, gives an objective reading of this music; he strives to make a universal program out of what is generally regarded as a personal one. There will be those who will contend that his performance is preferable to Stokowski's more highly personalized one. In our estimation, neither conductor has given the really definitive reading, although our preference leans toward the Rodzinski version. As a recording the latter is a magnificent achievement in orchestral reproduction.

Tchaikowsky's "Quartet in D major, Op. 11", was his first composition to find wide appeal out-

side of Russia. The youthful exuberance of its outer movements and the poetic sensitivity of its famous *Andante cantabile* are among its chief attributes. It is good to have this quartet recorded in its entirety—to hear the *Andante* as Tchaikowsky planned it to be heard. The Roth String Quartet plays this work for Columbia (set M-407), and for Royale the performers are the New York Philharmonic String Quartet (set 33). Neither of these performances does the composition full justice, and both are unevenly played. The newly reorganized Roth Quartet gives a



ARTUR RODZINSKI

more unified performance here than in its recent Haydn set, but while warmer in tonal quality than the more rugged performance of the Philharmonic group (composed of first desk men from the famous New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra), the Roths lack much of the latter's verve and assurance. From a reproductive standpoint, the Roth set is greatly preferable.

Among recent orchestral releases Dvořák's "Second Symphony", as played by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Vaclav Talich (Victor set M-663), is an eminently worth while composition. It is, perhaps, the most notable and interesting of the Czech master's

symphonies on records. Although the influence of Brahms is apparent in the melodies and harmonies of this music, no one but Dvořák, one feels, could have written it. The performance by one of Europe's finest orchestras (now disbanded) is a consummate one.

There is admirable detailed transparency in Bruno Walter's reading of Berlioz's "Fantastic Symphony" (Victor set M-662). It is not often that we hear this music played with such finesse and sensitivity. Although Walter does not whip up the melodramatic excitement of the latter part of the work, as do some other conductors, he none the less conveys its programmatic implications. In the beautiful, Beethovenish *pastorale* movement, his reading is memorable. The recording, made in France (the orchestra is that of the Paris Conservatory), is excellently contrived.

The Philadelphia Orchestra, under Eugene Ormandy's direction, gives a polished and luminous performance of Ravel's "Second Suite from Daphnis and Chloë" (Victor set M-667). The tonal splendors of this score, one of Ravel's best, are notably revealed by Victor's recording engineers. For instrumental coloring and shimmering nuance this set is one of the best extant.

Liszt's fourth tone poem, *Orpheus*, is a work of romantic ardor. Its poetic lyricism and thematic unity will surprise those who contend that Liszt is only a capricious genius. Inspired by Gluck's opera of the same name, the work depicts Orpheus singing and playing, revealing to "all humanity the beneficent power" of his art. Howard Barlow and the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra give an admirable performance of this music (Columbia album X-165).

Arthur Fiedler, conducting the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, plays four novelty waltzes by Johann Strauss (Victor set M-665). Two of these, the "New Vienna Waltz" and the "Cagliostro Waltz", are as irresistible as any of the composer's three-quarter time dances on records. On Victor discs 4489 and 4490, Fiedler turns his attentions to some "Austrian Peasant Dances", appropriately playing them in a manner reminiscent of Kursaal and beer garden bands.

Although Benno Moiseiwitsch, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Walter Goehr, gives a technically competent rendition of Rachmaninoff's "Second Piano Concerto" (Victor set M-666), he does not succeed in effacing the memory of the performance of ten years ago by the composer, and Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. The romantic sentiment of this work found more sympathetic interpreters in the older set; however, those who prefer reproductive superiority will find the Moiseiwitsch performance more satisfactory.

The Busch Quartet plays an early Schubert "Quartet, No. 8, in B-flat major" (written in the composer's seventeenth year), with wholly admirable expressiveness (Victor set M-670). Not one of Schubert's greatest chamber scores, there are, nevertheless, enjoyable sections throughout, especially in the tender slow movement and in the sparkling *finale*.

Chopin's *Berceuse in D-flat major, Op. 57* is a shimmeringly ornamental piece of tonal poetry. It is played with rare fluidity and nuance by Alexander Brailowsky (Continued on Page 576)

RECORDS

The School Orchestra Program

(Continued from Page 563)

classes must be exploited before they are prepared, but rather that material which combines adequate student training technics and suitable program material be utilized in having stringed instrument players perform publicly.

Individual string players should be encouraged to perform before their fellow students, in the assembly programs, before parent-teacher or other school and community groups. It is this activity that will evoke a high pitch of interest and enthusiasm from members of the string class, and there is the additional advantage that one of the primary problems—that of motivation—will have been eclipsed. There is in existence in our music literature quite a bit of worthy material which is sufficiently simple that it can be used very appropriately in this project. The need is for greater outlet, for more frequent public performance on the part of string players. In the case of bands, we have perhaps gone to excess in that respect.

In working out plans for rehearsals of strings and orchestra, we would suggest that during the junior high school period there be three string ensemble rehearsals per week, with two full orchestra rehearsals, or, if this is not possible, a schedule of string rehearsals daily with one full orchestra rehearsal on Saturday, as was suggested for the seventh grade. Naturally, the strings require much more instruction and guidance than the winds, yet we frequently find schedules which make no provision for the division or separation of the strings from the full orchestra. In the high school, much can be done with the choir groups which, up to the present time, have not been given due attention. There are numerous orchestral arrangements of excellent vocal numbers, many of which have not been performed often enough. Also this field provides the orchestra with beautiful choral works which have been limited in the past to the piano.

It must be emphasized that the schedule of the band and orchestra groups in our schools is of vital importance. Too often we find that the band and orchestra are rehearsing on alternate days; and that while this staggered schedule does not often harm the band, it does have an adverse effect on the orchestra. We must constantly bear in mind that string players cannot make progress with the same rapidity as the wind players, and therefore it should be a rule that the strings meet daily. In fact, it is possible to achieve good results only when the curriculum permits a daily rehearsal of each of the groups. Without an effective,

well prepared, fine sounding string section, the orchestra never can rise above mediocrity.

Ensemble groups among the strings, chamber groups, and solo performances, all should be fostered and encouraged as much as possible among our high school string players. Herein lies the root of the lack of personnel in the orchestras of our schools, and the lack of allure in the activity of these organizations. There is no real basis for saying that our schools are not prepared to support both organizations, the band and the orchestra. The average school can, and, with proper inspiration and support, the orchestra will prosper.

The orchestra is a treasured instrumental organization. It has antiquity and prestige, but more than that it has vitality and immortality. We wish to pride ourselves on the musical education proffered the young people of America. Yet, for educational breadth and for wide musical background, we shall be failing sadly if we overlook the development and eventual progress of our school orchestras.

The Miraculous Case of Blind Tom

(Continued from Page 517)

During the intermission, Tom's manager came to me and asked if I would give Tom a lesson on *Die Forelle* in the morning. Then came the explanation of his strange behavior during my playing of *Die Forelle*. Tom had heard this piece played somewhere in his travels two or three years before, and he was charmed with it. His manager had no idea what it was, and Tom could not remember enough to make anyone understand what he desired. He was eager to learn it and they kept up the search, taking him to music stores, to teachers, and to fine pianists, but no one understood. Now you can imagine what happened when this blind man, called an imbecile, heard the music he had tried so long to find? He went almost wild with joy which, as always, he was expressing through extreme bodily activity. This was going on behind me as I played.

The following morning, Tom and his manager arrived at the school. He was a man of medium height, a rather large body, strong and physically vigorous. During the entire lesson he was quiet and gentle, although he expressed great intensity of feeling. He had delicately formed flexible hands, for which the piano keyboard held no difficulties. He had gained great dexterity in his long years of playing, usually playing eight hours a day. At first I played through the entire composition, then the lesson consisted of my playing short portions, perhaps a

few complete phrases. During my playing Tom stood tense, all his being focused on the music. When he had heard a certain amount he indicated by words and sounds that he desired to play.

Perhaps I would be asked to play a second or third time these short bits, Tom listening most intently. Then he would sit at the piano, playing what I had done. He instantly recognized any wrong note he played and would shake his head, uttering disapproving sounds, and motion for me to play again. Anything he got pleased him greatly; but what he did not get annoyed him. When he felt satisfied we would go on, doing another portion in the same way; but the lesson consisted in my giving what he mentally reached out to receive. When we had accomplished a certain amount, we would go back and piece the parts together.

Thus we went on for four hours of almost absolute concentration. I do not remember that he ever wavered from the subject in hand. This I think would be considered as almost impossible by a person having his full mental faculties. At the end of this period he knew the composition and played it very acceptably. He had a fine instinctive feeling for the music and worked to get all the variations of shade and color just as I had played it. Two months later Tom returned for another engagement, and I was asked to give him a second lesson on *Die Forelle* before the concert. This lesson lasted only two hours and was spent entirely on interpretation. That evening *Die Forelle* was programmed, and I thought that I was almost listening to my own performance.

A Start to Fame

Blind Tom's concert career really began at the age of eight years in and near Columbus, Georgia. General Bethune went on tour with him in 1861, his first concert being given in New York on January 15th of that year. Afterward they toured Europe where he played during the years of the Civil War.

Amazing differences of opinion have been expressed in regard to this strange character. James M. Trotter writes, in "Music and Some Highly Musical People", "Who ever heard of an idiot possessing such memory, such fineness of musical sensibility, such order, such method, as he displays? Let us call it the embodiment, the soul of music, and there rest our investigations."

On Parnassus

When I heard him he had been playing many years and meeting many distinguished musicians. In 1866 he was thoroughly tested by Ignaz Moscheles, who pronounced Tom as marvelously gifted by nature. Moscheles had him imitate a short original rhythmical piece and parts of other compositions, and he even

placed his hands on the keys at random, Tom naming every note played. H. S. Oakley, Professor of Music at the University of Edinburgh, states: "I played on the organ, an instrument to which he is unaccustomed, parts of a Mendelssohn song, a few bars from a Bach Fugue, both of which he produced after a single hearing; a song of my own, which he could not possibly have heard, much of which he repeated. He not only can name any note chord or discord which is struck, but also can give the exact pitch of any note he is asked to sing, and that whilst any amount of discordant noise is made on the organ to disturb his meditations." This test was given when Tom was seventeen years of age.

In the list of his program music are given concertos by Beethoven, Chopin and Mendelssohn; six sonatas by Beethoven; and a long list of works by the great composers. Much of his own descriptive music and songs he played and sang. When he died it was claimed he had a repertoire of over seven thousand pieces.

A Talent Unique

Blind Tom's originality and marvelous musical gifts, which included musical inspiration, intuition, memory and imitation, made him unique; probably the most amazing musical prodigy that has ever been known.

His affairs got into the courts many times. The widow of John Bethune (who had married Albert T. Lerche, a lawyer), after a long fight in the courts with her father-in-law, General Bethune, finally succeeded to the immensely valuable guardianship of the blind musician. From then on he lived in Mrs. Lerche's apartment in Hoboken. He was kept much secluded, but appeared almost constantly in vaudeville. His name, Thomas Green Bethune, was changed to Thomas Wiggins. Of the fifty families in the building, only a few knew there was an old Negro living there; but sometimes exquisite piano playing was heard coming from Mrs. Lerche's apartment, with no one knowing it was produced by Blind Tom.

I will touch but briefly the last pathetic days of Tom's life. Three weeks before his death he suffered a paralytic stroke which affected his right arm and upper side. Again and again he tried to play, but when he found that his right hand would not play and the left hand brought only discords, he wept like a child and said, "Tom's fingers won't play no mo'."

Saturday evening, June 13, 1908, he again went to the piano and began softly singing, but his voice broke. Sobbing, he rose and said, "I'm done, all gone, missus;" and then was heard a faint cry, and a thump on the floor.

Blind Tom had gone on. Music was his life; and when he could play "no mo'", he could not stay.

The School Orchestra Program

(Continued from Page 529)

to think that it is unlawful for the young male student to study or play these instruments. It is not unusual to find violoncello and bass viol sections composed entirely of girls, and while this sort of situation cannot be condemned, there are certain inadequacies which should be avoided. We have frequently witnessed small young ladies struggling with the bass viol, when physically they would be far better able to handle a smaller instrument.

Seeking the Solution

In order to improve the quality and capabilities of school orchestras, it will be necessary to urge not only an increase in membership (at early ages) in string classes, but also an equal interest in the strings for both boys and girls. The explanation for a situation in which girls are handling string bass and violoncello probably lies in the fact that they are piano students, and with their ability to read music, the string bass serves as a good orchestral transfer or double. Yet we believe that, through no fault of their own, most of these young women do not have the physical strength to secure the tonal sonority and volume necessary for adequate performance of these instruments. This situation does not exist with the band, as its varied appeal attracts both boys and girls.

How can we best meet and solve the problems which have prevented a better growth of our school orchestras? Perhaps we can give our attention to a few suggestions for meeting and improving the current situation.

Without doubt there are definitely enough instrumentally minded students to maintain both a band and an orchestra for the average school. It is possible that in the very small school systems a lack of enrollment would prohibit the maintenance of both, but these cases are not typical. The support of both is particularly possible because a great many of the wood wind and brass players may be available for performance in both organizations. The problem does lie in the building up of string membership and sources in order to achieve the objective. An increase in piano classes in the early elementary grades would do much for this cause. The piano serves as an excellent background in the training of prospective string players, for it not only develops the musical ear but also gives the child a background in harmony so valuable to the string student. After a year or two of piano class, depending upon the age and progress of the student, we would then recommend transfer to the violin class. This would take place dur-

ing the child's entrance into either the fifth or sixth grade. The classes should be small, with not more than five or six students to a class, and should consist of violins alone, until at least the seventh grade.

Large string classes are responsible for so much of the inferior string playing found in our school orchestras; and just as much of the mediocre playing of some of our school bands is directly due to overlarge beginning wind classes. In the seventh grade, we would suggest the transfer of violin players to the viola, the violoncello and the bass viol, with extreme care and consideration being given to their adaptation to the particular instrument to which they have been transferred, both physically and musically. During this period of their training considerable attention must be given to the students on violoncello, viola, and bass viol, and the more important part of the string program should consist of string orchestra and string ensemble. A full orchestra rehearsal could be held at one period each week—preferably, if possible, on Saturday morning, as this will permit the wind and percussion players to attend the rehearsal without having it conflict with their regular school day schedule.

These early violin classes are the most neglected part of the string program, and until we have a much larger number of students participating in these violin classes, our orchestras will not advance to the so desirable status we seek for them.

It is extremely important for music educators and instrumental directors to observe the causes for trends in choice of instruments by children who are interested in music. If there is excessive lure to playing in bands, it can be met with more motivation, or more appeal to the young student to engage in orchestral activity, and particularly in string performance. The establishment of such motivation is truly a challenge to the instructor, a challenge both to his methods and to his ingenuity. We have found that far greater numbers of students abandon the stringed instruments in the early stages than abandon wind instruments. Much of this "mortality" rate is due first to the difficulty of the strings as compared with the winds, and secondly the lack of motivation for continuing in the string classes.

The Lure of Public Performance

It is at this point that we should prepare the class in strings for public performance, using preparatory material which is melodic, tuneful, and interesting to these youngsters. Too often in the past, dry, non-melodic material has been the beginner's lot, and perhaps it is a type of boredom or monotony which causes these beginning classes to dwindle gradually almost to nothing. Obviously, we do not mean to say that the string

(Continued on Page 564)

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY of MUSIC

CHICAGO

55th SEASON

Founded in 1886 by John J. Hattstaedt, today The American Conservatory of Music is outstanding among institutions for music education in this country. Its graduates are to be found occupying positions of honor and responsibility in every department of music.

Member of the National Association of Schools of Music

The Faculty—One hundred and thirty artist teachers, many of national and international reputation.

Accredited Courses are offered in Piano, Vocal, Violin, Organ, Orchestra and Band Instruments, Public School Music, Children's Piano Work, Class Piano, Musical Theory, Dramatic Art and Dancing.

Degrees—Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education, Master of Music and Master of Music Education are conferred by authority of the State of Illinois and recognized as a guarantee of accomplishment.

Dormitories—Desirable living and boarding accommodations can be secured at the Conservatory Dormitories at moderate rates. Particulars on request.

Professional and Teaching Engagements—Although the management does not guarantee positions, it has been most successful in assisting students to find remunerative situations in colleges, academies, music schools and in concert, opera, radio, orchestra, lyceum and choir work.

Tuition is reasonable in keeping with the times and may be paid in convenient installments. Complete particulars given in catalog which will be mailed on request.

Students' Self Help—The management makes every endeavor to assist needy students to find part-time employment. Many find work as teachers, accompanists or part-time positions working for commercial houses, etc.

Fall Term Starts September 12th.

For free catalog address John R. Hattstaedt Pres.

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
576 Kimball Hall, Chicago, Ill.

WANTED!

Music Lovers to earn LIBERAL COMMISSIONS securing subscriptions for THE ETUDE. Part or full time. No Cost or Obligation. Write for complete details TODAY! Address:

CIRCULATION DEPT.
THE ETUDE MUSIC MAGAZINE
1712 CHESTNUT ST., PHILA., PA.

DePaul
UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO
THE SCHOOL OF
Music

offers accredited courses in Piano, Voice, Violin, Organ, Public School Music, Harmony, and Orchestral Instruments. Confers Degrees of B. M., Ph. B., and M. M.

Distinguished faculty including

ARTHUR C. BECKER
SERGEI TARNOWSKY
MME. MARIA KURENKO
RICHARD CZERWONKY
WALTER KNUFFER
SAMUEL A. LIEBERSON

The Dept. of Drama offers a 3-year Course

Address Registrar for Bulletin

DePAUL UNIVERSITY
Room 401, 64 E. Lake Street, Chicago, Ill.

NORTH PARK COLLEGE

E. Clifford Toren,
Director

School of Music

49th Year

Trains students for active musical careers in their chosen field. Progressive faculty. Conservatory occupies own building. Piano, voice, violin, cello, reed and brass instruments, church and choral music, theory, music education and expression. Summer School begins June 24.

Write E. CLIFFORD TOREN, Dir.
3201 Foster Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Do you take advantage of the many excellent merchandising opportunities which ETUDE Advertising Columns offer you?

A professional school in a university environment

For Free Bulletins Write to

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

1830 Sherman Avenue
Evanston, Illinois

NORTHWESTERN

UNIVERSITY

lishing new works that have been described in these notes, this will serve as a notice that the special advance of publication cash price on the following works is now withdrawn. Copies may be had from your local music dealer, or may be obtained for examination from the publishers on our usual liberal terms.

Little Players, A Piano Book for Very Young Beginners, by Robert Nolan Kerr, immediately will attract the youngster in whose hands a copy is placed as a first piano book. Issued in the convenient oblong style, size about 9 1/4 x 6 3/4", its attractive illustrations will at once captivate the child. The presentation of the first things that must be learned about music and piano playing is by rote and note, all made as simple as possible. Texts and illustrations bring out familiar experiences in the average child's day and explicit directions are given for developing, from the very beginning, a sense of rhythm. Price, 50 cents.

Nutcracker Suite (Tschaikowsky), A Story with Music for the Piano, arranged by Ada Richter brings within the playing capabilities of piano students below 10 years of age, who are in grades 2, 2 1/2 or 3, some of the most fascinating music ever written for the younger generation. In the playing of the orchestral arrangements or the original piano transcriptions of the pieces that Tschaikowsky wrote to describe musically the incidents of this now familiar Russian fairy tale, children heretofore could only listen. And how they did listen and look when they were privileged to witness Walt Disney's epic, "Fantasia." Ada Richter's arrangements of Tschaikowsky's melodies and her telling of the story, all in a 24-page book, make an attractive gift volume for young folk, as well as a most valuable collection of supplementary material for juvenile pianists. Price, 60 cents.

DO YOU HAVE A COMPLETE CATALOG OF VICTOR RECORDS? This amazing catalog is virtually a volume giving a list of the things which have become the established favorites with music lovers of all ages and tastes everywhere. Here one finds listed an incredible number of selections representing the best choices in classical, operatic, sacred, standard, and popular music. Then there is a wide variety of renditions—vocal solos, instrumental solos, vocal ensembles, and instrumental groups from dance bands to the world-famous symphony orchestras. The many performers, operatic companies, dance bands, symphony orchestras, chamber music groups, etc., named in the Complete Catalog of Victor Records also makes it something of a "Who's Who" of outstanding artists and musical organizations. These things make this great catalog worth a lot to any lover of music, but most important of all it serves as a splendid guide book in securing records for your musical enjoyment. Send 25 cents (U. S. postage stamps accepted) to Theodore Presser Co. for a copy of this 612-page catalog of Victor records. "Presser's" carries a very comprehensive stock of Victor records and ships ordered records to any part of the United States or its Possessions.

CHORUS AND CHOIR DIRECTORS . . .

Send for FREE thematic catalogs of outstanding choruses for Men's Voices, Treble Voices, Mixed Voices—of successful anthems for Mixed Voices.

Address: THEODORE PRESSER CO.
1712 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

Next Month

A CHRISTMAS ISSUE OF SURPRISES

"Better than the best" is what our Editors told us when we asked them about the Christmas Etude. Continuing, they added: "It's just 'tops'. There is interest and profit and charm on every page."



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

The world dominance of the great Rachmaninoff in the world of the piano is widely recognized. It is many years since we induced Rachmaninoff to speak for The Etude, but he has given us a wonderful conference entitled "Music Should Speak from the Heart" which every music lover, teacher and student should read.

LIONEL BARRYMORE

One of the greatest actors America has produced is also a very fine musician and pianist. He tells in exceedingly interesting fashion "What Music Has Meant in My Life."

THE MAN WHO WAS ALWAYS READY

Frederick Jagel, leading tenor of the Metropolitan, has been called upon many times at the last moment to fill the place of the foremost tenors of the world, and he has always come off with great honors and won an outstanding place for himself. How he has become a model of musical preparedness is the subject of a most sensible and helpful article in December.

YES, WE HAVE MUSIC IN HAWAII

Our mid-Pacific arsenal has developed a distinctive and highly original musical life which is described in vivid fashion by Peggy Hickok in the Christmas Etude.

ERNEST HUTCHESON

Eminent virtuoso pianist and President of the Juilliard School of Music, who has long been one of the leading piano teachers of America, tells how a general musical training should be "unified" to the higher advantage of piano students. This one article is worth the value of the entire year's subscription to any student needing such priceless advice from a great authority.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

Hattie C. Fleck has gone into unusual byways to bring out new knowledge about the glorious old carols which form such a beautiful part of the Christmas festivities in thousands of homes.

Letters from Etude Friends

She, Too, Went "Back to the Piano"

TO THE ETUDE:

My ETUDE came yesterday morning early and, as usual, I sat down in the midst of the Saturday morning work, opened it, and almost the first article I saw was the one, "Go Back to the Piano," by Mrs. M. M. Davies.

I felt, after reading it, that if I could see her or write to her, I'd love to tell her how much good it did me to know there was someone else who thought as I do about this dropping of our music just because we are getting old (in years, not in ambition to make music).

I recall some years ago an article written for THE ETUDE by Harold Bauer (I think it is spelled correctly) in which he urged people to keep up their music, if for no other reason than the pleasure it gave to one's friends and also the many opportunities to help in the community.

Mrs. Davies believes in a hobby. She is absolutely right. I look at so many of the young women of to-day, who are frittering away the best part of their lives with no apparent aim or constructive interest. Like Mrs. Davies', mine has been music. Not so many music lessons, but years of practice and teaching, and, at seventy-two—which I will be next week—I am not quitting. They won't let me if I want to. I played in church this morning and expect to help in the Easter music.

As she says, a person's fingers do get stiff; but I have noticed, too, that the old things you played well in your more youthful days somehow come back and sound quite creditable with a little practice.

In this day of radio I wonder how many do as I do—play with the radio. It's great fun—and instructive, too. Fortunately, my piano is in tune with almost all the orchestras, and whenever a familiar selection is played, I sit down and play with them. My grandchildren think it's wonderful when Grandma plays with a radio orchestra.

A few days ago the great organ in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City was pouring forth a grand old number and, as I knew it from memory, I sat down and played too, and for once my interpretation coincided with the organist's. This is not always the case. I really was quite puffed up about it. The piano and the organ were exactly in tune. I don't know many people who do this, but they would find it a great pleasure. It's interesting to note the different interpretations of selections, almost as many as there are players or conductors.

I have a sister who gave a program of music a few weeks ago that would appall some of the young players. She played all but one number from memory and, as she had no piano at home, was forced to go out to "brush up" on her pieces in getting ready for the program. Through misfortune she has to get out every day and sell from door to door; and when I think of her courage to keep playing whenever she can, and at the age of sixty-eight, too, I think she deserves real homage.

I am thinking as I write this that perhaps very much credit should go to the makers of THE ETUDE. I know it has kept up my interest as nothing else could, all these many years.

I must tell you of this sister having to give a Sibelius program for her club. She wrote that she did not know where to get material. I wrote her of an ETUDE that had just what she wanted, and it saved the day for her. This was either in 1940 or '39.

So in closing I am so thankful for such a paper as THE ETUDE and for such articles as this one by Mrs. Davies. I loved every word of it.

Let's hope more people get back to their pianos; let's make more music, and as long as we can.—MRS. T. J. WALTERS.

More About Blind Tom

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ETUDE:

I have intended writing you ever since I read the article in last Summer's Etude (August, 1940) about Blind Tom, for some of the statements made do not agree with my mother's memoirs. Blind Tom was born of a mulatto slave belonging to my mother's uncle, General Bethune, on his plantation near Columbus, Georgia.

Henry Watterson, James Aswell, and The Etude article mentioned by Miss Abbott, each state that the mother was bought on the auction block with Tom in her arms. Mother's account says he was born on Uncle Bethune's place and gives her theory of Tom's unusual musical ability. It seems his mother (I have forgotten her name), before Tom's birth, had gone up to Columbus to the firmen's parade where she heard numerous bands playing, and Mother wrote that she returned "in an ecstasy of delight." Mother—Mrs. John H. Owen—and her second oldest child, Mrs. Laura Boggess, now of Dallas, ninety-three years old, visited Aunt Frances Bethune

when Tom was between five and seven. Tom was born in 1849 and Sister Laura, December, 1848; and, being over a year older, she and her little cousins used to tease the poor little blind fellow considerably. Tom claimed kin with all of them and called Mother "Cousin Lizzie." On this visit Mother was in the parlor playing, probably the *Irish Washerwoman*, and Tom crawled under the old square piano and afterwards said, "Cousin Lizzie, what was that you were playing?" It was then, I think, that they discovered his remarkable gift. I was talking to my sister in Dallas, not so long ago; and, while her mind is wonderfully clear, she couldn't remember many little details I was anxious to learn. Tom had been to Navasota twice, in 1876 or '77, when my twin sister and I were about seven; I remember how "we kids" were gleeful about getting first row seats complimentary. Cousin John Bethune, who was his manager, announced that Tom would now play a piece which was played for him years ago by a lady in the audience; and, after his playing, Father arose and verified the fact. It was some old-time piece.

Tom, who was not crippled nor deformed as some have written, visited our home but was shy of the women folk. Cousin John was killed on a train near New Orleans. We Owens did not know of his poverty in his last years, as the *Courier Journal* mentioned in the Editorial at his death, for we would not have let him suffer for want.

Tom came to Navasota again in the nineties, when I was out of town, but a neighbor tells me he played the usual pieces—*Battle of Manassas*, *The Rain Storm*, and others of his compositions. My older sister played one of his compositions *La—something*; we hum the tune even now, but cannot recall the title.

I have not had a music class for several years, as the school band entices what few pupils our small town affords—for the easy credits; and there are few here who are talented enough for the violin.—JULIA D. OWEN.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC. REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

OF THE ETUDE, published Monthly at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for October 1, 1941. State of Pennsylvania } SS. County of Philadelphia }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Henry E. Batton, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the President of the Theodore Presser Company, publishers of THE ETUDE MUSIC MAGAZINE and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher Theodore Presser Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Editor James Francis Cooke, Llanberis Rd., Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. Managing Editor None.

Business Manager Henry E. Batton, Wissa. & S. Westview, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2. That the owners are: Theodore Presser Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Presser Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Estate of Theodore Presser, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

James Francis Cooke, Llanberis Rd., Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania.

Edwin B. Garrigue, School Lane & Wissa-hickon Ave., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) HENRY E. BATTON, Business Manager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 25th day of September, 1941.

SEAL ALAN F. MCKINLEY, Notary Public (My commission expires May 6, 1944)

musician of importance. Now we are happy to announce this addition to the Keating list, which, we are certain, will also achieve a notable success. The generous contents, made up of about forty numbers, includes both original works and adaptations of well known melodies. The arrangements throughout are for two-part chorus and young voices have been carefully considered as to range, etc. Among the original works are: *The Sunlight of the Lord; The Glorious Giver We Praise; The Lamp of His Mercy; The Lord's Prayer; The Beatitudes*, etc. The adaptations are from the works of Schubert, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Tschai-kowsky, Dvorak, Beethoven, Sibelius, and others.

Those wishing to order a single copy of this splendid collection at the advance of publication cash price of 25 cents, postpaid, should place their orders at this time. Delivery will be made when the book comes from the press. The sale, however, will be confined to the United States and Its Possessions.

CONCERT TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FAVORITE HYMNS, for Piano, by Clarence Kohlmann—There is an endless and incessant demand for the favorite hymns in good



useful piano arrangements. Opportunities for their use come up every day, particularly in the field of religious activity. Also in the home and in the studio there is a ready place for this music we love. For these reasons we have arranged with Mr. Clarence Kohlmann for

the preparation of the book offered here. Mr. Kohlmann's achievements in the field of transcription are well known. He has won a national following as organist at the great Auditorium in Ocean Grove, N. J., where for many summers he has delighted thousands of religious workers with his expert musicianship.

This new album will comprise more than twenty hymns in excellent pianistic adaptations in grades three and four. Among the contents one will find such favorites as: *Sun of My Soul; Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us; Onward, Christian Soldiers; Sweet Hour of Prayer; Day Is Dying in the West; My Jesus, I Love Thee; The Promised Land; and I Love to Tell the Story.*

While this book is being made ready, any one may place an order for a single copy at the advance of publication cash price of 40 cents, postpaid. Copies will be delivered upon publication. Copyright restrictions, however, will limit its sale to the United States and Its Possessions.

IN ROBOT LAND—An Operetta for Men's Voices, in Two Acts, by L. E. Yeamans—The city of the future with its almost mechanical inhabitants presents an excellent background for the action of this novel operetta which was conceived by the late Mr. L. E. Yeamans, formerly a member of the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. The action deals with the manifold tribulations of two American fliers who find themselves stranded in a land of supermen from which all women except two have been excluded. A series of ludicrous situations finally culminates in the escape of the fliers accompanied by the remaining feminine element of Robot land.

This work may be easily staged, and the costumes require only a minimum of cost and effort. The eleven musical num-

JOHN McCORMACK
The Story of a Singer
 by L. A. G. STRONG

One of the most fascinating biographies we have ever published. It is a fairy tale come true—the story of the unknown lad from Athlone who rose to world fame.
\$3.00

OUR SINGING COUNTRY
 by JOHN A. LOMAX
 and ALAN LOMAX

A second volume of American ballads and folk songs collected by the Lomaxes. Music transcribed by Ruth Crawford Seeger. Probably **\$5.00**

All bookstores

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
 60 Fifth Ave., New York

bers, which include an overture, four solos, three duets, a quartet, and a number of choruses, are very melodious and quite in keeping with the tenor of the book. Eleven principles are required, including five tenors (one light), three baritones, and two basses (one heavy). Send for a copy now at our special advance of publication cash price of 40 cents, postpaid.

MY PIANO BOOK, Part Two, by Ada Richter—This book, although planned to complete the year's work begun in Part One, may be employed by beginners who



have used another instruction book and are ready to begin the study of scales and pieces of grade one-and-a-half. The study of "thumb-under" passages for both hands, grace notes, chromatic scale passages, triplets, and arpeggios is continued in Part Two, and particular attention is given to the presentation of new note values and rhythms. Special holidays are also observed, with appropriate pieces for Valentine's Day, May Day, and Easter. Also included are several teacher and pupil duets, one trio, and a few simplified arrangements of old favorites. Important scale studies with instruction regarding their presentation at each lesson are to be found at the back of the book. The book ends with a test on the material covered. A single copy may now be ordered at our advance of publication cash price of 25 cents, postpaid.

ADAM GEIBEL ANTHEM BOOK—The famous blind composer, Adam Geibel, not only wrote many gospel songs, hymns, and anthems that have become established favorites in Evangelical Churches, but he also set up his own music publishing company. Recently the Theodore Presser Co. secured the publishing rights of a number of fine anthems by the late Dr. Geibel, which were first published by the Adam Geibel Music Company.

Although all of these anthems are available separately in octavo form and are enjoying excellent sales, it has been decided to make a selected group of these

anthems available to those choirs which, for convenience as well as for the needs of meeting a limited budget, prefer anthems in collection form. Every one of the Geibel anthems to be included in this collection is a useful number of the type that congregations like to hear and which the average volunteer choir can sing effectively. This means that the church choir obtaining and using this collection will get special value.

Upon publication it will bear a nominal price and while it is in course of preparation choirmasters may obtain for their own personal reference libraries a single copy at the advance of publication cash price of 35 cents, delivery of this copy to be made as soon as the book is published.

THE SINGER'S HANDBOOK, by Lazar S. Samoiloff—An internationally-known authority on voice, and teacher of famous singers of the Metropolitan and Chicago Opera Companies, Dr. Samoiloff has for many years been active as a vocal teacher in New York City and, since 1929, in Los Angeles. He has held Master Classes in various sections of the country, particularly in Chicago, San Diego, and Denver. Now he is ready to extend the benefits of his rich experience by offering to the musical world this "Singer's Handbook."

Dr. Samoiloff's writing is logical and sound; he uses straight-forward, clear English, and has a keen sense of form and climax. Any serious student who is willing to follow the basic principles he advocates for the specified length of time demanded cannot help being improved in his singing. He touches upon almost every subject necessary to an artistic career, musicianship, intelligence, personality, a knowledge of languages, how to dress, how to stand, how to behave before the public, etc. Of special value are carefully selected lists of songs suitable to every sort of voice.

Everyone interested in singing will want a copy of this important book, which may be ordered now in advance of publication at \$1.25, postpaid.

STRAUSS ALBUM OF WALTZES—Although the Vienna of Schubert, the Strauss family, and other talented composers no longer is the mecca of pleasure-seeking music lovers, interest in the music of these masters, especially the so-called "younger Strauss," Johann Jr., is ever on the increase. Little did the "Waltz King" of his day imagine that the tunes he wrote for the gay dancers of the Vienna cafes would one day be programmed by leading symphony orchestras.



Listening to the fine recordings of the Strauss waltzes, and the frequent broadcasting of them on the better radio programs, the American public has come to a better appreciation of their beauties, their distinctive rhythmic charm. The successful motion picture *The Great Waltz*, portraying incidents in the life of the composer, also did much to popularize some of his delightful compositions.

Pianists of average ability can enjoy many delightful hours playing the fine collection of Strauss waltzes assembled for this new album. It contains such favorites as *On the Beautiful Blue Danube, Sounds from the Vienna Woods, Roses from the South, Artists' Life,*

The Great History of Music for the Modern Reader

MUSIC IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION
 By Paul Henry Lang

Heretofore musical history has been treated as an isolated domain of human activity. In this new book it receives its rightful place in the general stream of civilization. The spirit of each age finds its expression in music; all aspects of life have been influenced by music, and now, at last, this dramatic and exciting story is told in full for the first time. Beautifully illustrated.
 1100 Pages. \$5.00

W. W. NORTON & CO., 70 FIFTH AVE., N. Y. C.

Wine, Woman and Song, and others.

At the special advance of publication price, 40 cents, postpaid, this book is indeed a rare bargain and the publishers suggest the immediate placing of your order while this special offer is in effect.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS—Where you change your address, advise us at least four weeks in advance of the publication date, which is the first of each month, giving both old and new addresses. This will prevent your copies from going astray.

LET'S CHEER! BAND BOOK, by Fulton-Chenette—A collection that is novel in the sense that it contains the type of numbers associated with college sports together with some welcome surprises. Familiar tunes that may be sung by the band or bleacherites are featured, including *De Camptown Races, The Marine Hymn, John Peel, In the Gloaming, Men of Harlech, Yankee Doodle*, and many others. On the whole it may be summarized as a group of attractive new numbers especially written and practically arranged for this book. It is not just a haphazard collection to be relegated to a dark corner in the music library, but one to be kept in constant use. Instrumentation for full band.

In advance of publication copies of the various parts may be ordered at the special introductory price, 20 cents each; the Piano-Conductor book at 30 cents. These are postpaid prices, and the books will be delivered when published.

ADVANCE OF PUBLICATION OFFERS WITHDRAWN—Piano teachers will be pleased with the new works now ready for publication that are being placed on sale this month. Those having in charge the instruction of very young students, especially, will be much pleased with these new books prepared by practical teachers who have written for their confreres so much attractive teaching material. As is the usual practice when pub-

Bno-Dart

INDUSTRIES

Newark 14, N.J. • Los Angeles 25, Calif.
Toronto 28, Ontario Made in U. S. A.

